

Michael Ortiz
Education Hearing

Good afternoon, members of the Education and Accountability Committee. My name is Michael Ortiz and I am currently a junior at Amistad Academy High School. I am here to talk to you today about An Act Concerning Charter Schools.

I've been apart of the Amistad family for seven years since joining the middle school as a fifth grader. That is what we are: family. For many of us, we leave our homes to attend another home. This is especially true for me, as both my younger sisters attend Amistad Academy, Aliyah is at Amistad Elementary and Mariah is a sophomore at Amistad High with me. Like a true family, we are like minded in what we want for each other: every person who steps foot into Amistad Academy or Elm City Academy wants for themselves and for everyone one else to succeed. We measure success in our college readiness and the quality of our character. We build friendships through studying together, by playing sports or through the clubs like debate and chess. We build on what others have done before us and make each day our next step to college. Everyday we get the opportunity to prove that we are capable and ready to handle what rightly belongs to us: and that is the future.

I am coming before you today to ask for your help so that students from Elm City College Prep can enjoy the same high school experience that I have. I know I am receiving a top-notch education, and I want the same for them. We would like to all go to one cooperative high school that is able to offer an education we can all enjoy. The cool thing is that our traditions are the same – built from very similar middle school

experiences. The newest freshmen are just like the oldest juniors in that we all have a like minded expectation: as we do our best work, we will be rewarded with the best work of our teachers. I am glad that I can share this, not just with my sister, but the friends who have become family and the teachers who share in our dream to graduate from college. This dream is a combination of both responsibility and ambition. Ambition has been the key to our successes together at Amistad and Elm City and my responsibility is clear: to continue to work hard, to make the most of the opportunities before me.

Just recently our president stated “The future belongs to the nation that best educates its citizens.” It is truly amazing to hear that sentiment echoed at such a level, as we have heard this every day of school. Since fifth grade, I have been told that college is in my future. Now as a junior, and surrounded by so many others like me, I am determined to complete the climb to college graduation. It is not just the teachers at Amistad and Elm City, but the other students, both younger and older, who have worked hard to get to this moment.

The experiences that I have had in high school can only be topped by the possibilities that are before me. I truly feel that the future is bright. Next year, I will graduate from high school. I want to attend either UCONN or Yale to study science. I am taking AP Biology right now, and I love it. I hope to become either a science teacher or a doctor who is focused on cancer treatment – and maybe even a cure for cancer.

Thank you for your time.